

CLAIMS:

1. A method of producing a tool component including the steps of:
 - (1) providing a plurality of fibres, each fibre having a core comprising a mass of ultra-hard abrasive particles or precursor to said ultra-hard abrasive particles and optionally a second phase, and a coating comprising a mixture of carbide particles and particulate binder metal,
 - (2) producing a bundle of the fibres,
 - (3) severing the bundle transverse to its length to produce a layer,
 - (4) placing the layer on a surface of a substrate, and
 - (5) subjecting the layer and substrate to elevated temperature and pressure conditions at which the ultra-hard abrasive particles are crystallographically stable.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the bundle of fibres is extruded prior to being severed to produce the layer.
3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the core comprises a mixture of diamond or cubic boron nitride particles and an appropriate solvent/catalyst, in particulate form, bonded into a coherent form by means of an organic binder.
4. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the coating is bonded into a coherent form by means of an organic binder.
5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the carbide particles are tungsten carbide particles, tantalum carbide particles or molybdenum carbide particles.

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6. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the substrate is a cemented carbide substrate.
7. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the coating comprises one or more layers.
8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the coating comprises more than one layer, each layer differing from an adjacent layer in physical and/or chemical properties.
9. A method according to claim 8, wherein one layer has coarser or finer carbide particles than the adjacent layer(s) or contains a different metal binder to that in the adjacent layer(s).
10. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tool component comprising the substrate has a working portion produced from the layer bonded to a surface thereof.
11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the working portion comprises a composite material comprising essentially a honeycomb structure of cemented carbide and abrasive compact material within the pores of the honeycomb structure and bonded to the honeycomb structure.
12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the pores of the honeycomb structure are ordered or random.
13. A method of producing a tool component including the steps of:
 - (1) providing a plurality of fibres, each fibre having a core comprising a mixture of carbide particles and particulate binder metal, and a coating comprising a mass of ultra-hard abrasive

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particles or precursor to said ultra-hard abrasive particles and optionally a second phase,

- (2) producing a bundle of the fibres,
- (3) severing the bundle transverse to its length to produce a layer,
- (4) placing the layer on a surface of a substrate, and
- (5) subjecting the layer and substrate to elevated temperature and pressure conditions, at which the ultra-hard abrasive particles are crystallographically stable.